

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 ACDA-07 DHA-02 ORM-02 ARA-06

IO-13 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 INR-07 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO AMEMBASSY KIGALI

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6061

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0318

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RW, BY

SUBJ: RWANDAN CONCERNS ABOUT BURUNDI ARMED FORCES

REF : KIGALI 0320

1. WHILE AVOIDING ANY COMMENT ON RWANDAN FONMIN NSEKALIJE'S VIEWS OF SOVIET AND U.S. POLICIES IN AFRICA (REFTEL, I SHOULD PUT ON THE RECORD A MORE OBJECTIVE VIEW OF BURUNDI'S MILITARY CAPABILITIES.

2. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR, WHO SUPERVISES A MILITARY TRAINING MISSION OF OVER 20 OFFICERS HERE, TOLD ME THIS WEEK THAT HIS MISSION HAS CONCLUDED THAT BURUNDI'S ARMY IS UNDISCIPLINED AND INEXPERIENCED, THAT IT SHOWS UP LAUGHABLY IN EVEN SMALL UNIT FIELD EXERCISES, AND THAT, ESSENTIALLY, IT HAS NO COMBAT CAPABILITY. HIS OFFICERS HAVE LONG BEWAILED THE LOGISIIIC SYSTEM (OR RATHER THE LACK OF IT), AND THE IN-ORDINATE DOWN TIME OF EQUIPMENT NEEDING REPAIR.

3. SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES WILL NOT CHANGE THIS SITUATION. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEY AMOUNT TO ONLY ABOUT FOUR AND ONE-HALF MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OVER FOUR OR FIVE YEARS.

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SECONDLY, THEY ARE MOSTLY SMALL ARMS, WITH PERHAPS A DOZEN OR TWO ARMORED CARS, PLUS SOME ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS, ROCKET ARTILLERY AND OTHER LIGHT EQUIPMENT, WHICH IS MOSTLY INTENDED TO REPLACE AGING BELGIAN MATERIEL.

4. WITHOUT GIVING THE RWANDANS THESE DETAILS OR THIS EVALUATION OF BURUNDI'S ARMY, I THINK THAT THEY SHOULD NOT

BE ALLOWED TO THINK THAT WE BELIEVE THE RWANDAN VERSION OF BURUNDI'S CAPABILITIES. INDEED, IN MANPOWER NUMBERS, BURUNDI IS ONLY ABOUT 50 PERCENT LARGER THAN RWANDA, AND THIS CAN BE EXPLAINED EASILY BY INTERNAL SECURITY NEEDS. AS FOR NSEKALIJE'S IDEAS THAT BURUNDI MIGHT EXPLOIT RWANDAN TUTSI REFUGEES HERE FOR A MILITARY ADVENTURE, IT IS FANCIFUL. NOT ONLY IS THE NEW BURUNDI REGIME CONTINUING THE TRADITIONAL COLD SHOULDER TO THE RWANDANS, BUT IT HAS BEGUN A DRIVE TO PUSH THEM OUT OF SUCH JOBS IN BUJUMBUR'S COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY WHICH THEY HAVE OBTAINED OVER THE YEARS. THIS DISAFFECTED GROUP IS HARDLY LIKELY TO DO BURUNDI BIDDING, EVEN IF ANY SUCH THOUGHT OF INCURSION INTO RWANDA WERE NOT ALSO ABOUT THE FURTHEST THING FROM THE MIND OF ALL SENIOR BURUNDI OFFICIALS AND MILITARY.

5. AS FOR THE CUBANS, BURUNDI HAS TRIED TO GET SOME ECONOMIC AND PERHAPS MILITARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THEM, AS FROM SOVIETS, FRENCH, EGYPTIANS, LIBYANS, AND OTHERS, BUT HAVANA HAS BEEN ALMOST TOTALLY UNRESPONSIVE TO DATE, DESPITE A FEW VISITS.

6. I AM, OF COURSE, ALL FOR CONTINUING TO LET TOP BURUNDIAN OFFICIALS KNOW THAT SOME RWANDANS ARE STILL VERY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT THEY FEEL IS SOVIET MILITARY INVOLVEMENT HERE IN A BURUNDIAN ARMY BUILDUP, AND I AM GLAD THAT NSEKALIJE HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT WE ARE URGING RESTRAINT ALL AROUND. HOWEVER, THE RWANDANS SHOULD BE DISABUSED OF THEIR SERIOUS EXAGGERATIONS ABOUT BURUNDI; OR, IF THEY CANNOT BE DISABUSED, THEY SHOULD AT LEAST KNOW THAT WE CANNOT SHARE SUCH VIEWS. FOR WHATEVER IT  
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IS WORTH, THEY CAN ALSO BE TOLD OF MY PERSONAL CONCLUSION THAT THE NEW BURUNDIAN REGIME IS SINCERELY INTERESTED IN PUSHING FORWARD THE DETENTE AND RECONCILIATION WITH RWANDA WHICH MICOMBERO AND HABYARIMANA LAUNCHED THREE YEARS AGO.  
MARK

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## Message Attributes

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